

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 205

Deploring human rights abuses in Kosova and calling for increased American involvement.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 1998

Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. KING, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, and Mr. LANTOS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Deploring human rights abuses in Kosova and calling for increased American involvement.

Whereas the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, adopted in 1946 and the amended Yugoslav Constitution adopted in 1974, described the status of Kosova as one of the eight constituent territorial units of the Yugoslav Federation;

Whereas the political rights of the Albanian majority in Kosova were curtailed when the Government of Yugoslavia illegally amended the Yugoslav federal constitution without the consent of the people of Kosova on March 23, 1989, revoking Kosova's autonomous status;

Whereas, in 1990, the Parliament and Government of Kosova were abolished by further unlawful amendments to the Constitution of Yugoslavia;

Whereas, in September 1990, a referendum on the question of independence for Kosova was held in which 87 percent of those eligible to participate voted and 99 percent of those voting supported independence for Kosova;

Whereas, in May 1992, a Kosovar National Parliament and President, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, were freely and fairly elected, but were not permitted to assemble in Kosova;

Whereas, according to the State Department Country Reports on Human Rights for 1996, “Police repression continued to be directed against ethnic minorities, particularly the Albanians of Kosovo”;

Whereas Human Rights Watch/Helsinki reports that “random harassment and beatings is a daily reality for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo”;

Whereas, during 1997, the human rights situation facing Kosova worsened during 1997 with the increased use of violence by police against ethnic Kosovars;

Whereas increased repression and despair has allegedly given rise to a new group, the Kosova Liberation Army, which reportedly has a greater willingness to use violence to achieve self-determination and a restoration of human rights;

Whereas, on October 1, 1997, Serb riot police wielding batons and firing tear gas brutally repressed a peaceful demonstration of students of the University of Pristina calling for the right to Albanian-language education;

Whereas scores of non-violent protestors were injured in the crackdown;

Whereas a 1996 agreement on education signed by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and Kosovar President Rugova provided for return of ethnic Albanians to the classroom;

Whereas the United States Government has called for “implementation of the agreement at all levels, including at the University level”;

Whereas the agreement has not yet been implemented by the government in Belgrade;

Whereas new elections in Kosova are scheduled for March 22, 1998;

Whereas the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe observers dispatched to Kosova in 1991 were expelled by the government in Belgrade in July 1993, and have not been reinstated as called for in United Nations Security Council Resolution 855 of August 1993;

Whereas, following the departure of such observers, international human rights organizations have documented an increase in abuses;

Whereas, pursuant to U.S. section 223 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993, the United States opened a United States Information Service Office in Pristina, Kosova in 1996;

Whereas the international outer wall of sanctions against the former Yugoslavia, which links membership in international organizations, access to international financial institutions, and normalization of diplomatic relations with the United States, is conditioned upon significant progress in resolving the problems in Kosova;

Whereas the Contact Group of nations pressing for a resolution to the situation in Bosnia addressed the situation in

Kosova directly for the first time in 1997, supporting an enhanced status for Kosova within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; one that would fully protect the rights of the Albanian population in accordance with OSCE standards and the U.N. Charter;

Whereas H. Con. Res. 155, which passed the House of Representatives on July 26, 1996, called for a resolution to the crisis in Kosova, maintenance of the outer wall of sanctions against Belgrade, and the appointment of a Special Envoy on Kosova; and

Whereas, with the continued implementation of the Dayton agreement on Bosnia, future peace in the Balkans hinges largely on a settlement of the status of Kosova: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

3 (1) the situation in Kosova must be resolved be-
4 fore the outer wall of sanctions against Serbia is lift-
5 ed and Serbia is able to return to the international
6 community;

7 (2) the human rights of the people of Kosova
8 must be restored to levels guaranteed by inter-
9 national law;

10 (3) the United States should support the legiti-
11 mate claims of the people of Kosova to determine
12 their own political future;

13 (4) a solution to the conflict in Kosova can only
14 be achieved through dialogue, not violence;

1 (5) the March 22, 1998 elections in Kosova
2 should be permitted to proceed without interference
3 by the Belgrade authorities and, if conducted freely
4 and fairly, the United States should recognize the
5 results of the elections as a legitimate, democratic
6 expression of the will of the people of Kosova;

7 (6) international observers should be returned
8 to Kosova as soon as possible and monitors should
9 be dispatched to observe the upcoming elections;

10 (7) the elected government of Kosova should be
11 permitted to meet and exercise its legitimate man-
12 date as elected representatives of the people of
13 Kosova;

14 (8) all individuals whose employment was termi-
15 nated on the basis of their ethnicity should be rein-
16 stated to their previous positions;

17 (9) the agreement on education in Kosova
18 should be implemented immediately, including at the
19 university level, allowing all residents of Kosova re-
20 gardless of ethnicity to education in their native
21 tongue;

22 (10) the students of the University of Pristina
23 have the full support of the United States as they
24 peacefully demonstrate to return to classes at the
25 University;

1 (11) efforts of the international Contact Group
2 in support of a resolution of the conflict in Kosova
3 are to be commended; and

4 (12) the President should appoint a special
5 envoy to aid in negotiating a resolution to the crisis
6 in Kosova.

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